

Savanna Restoration at John Muir's Boyhood Haunts

Final Report December 30, 2003

Project Description: This project is to restore 200 acres of oak savanna at John Muir's boyhood haunts - Muir Park and Observatory Hill State Hill State Natural Areas.

Proposed Project: Invasive trees (red cedar, black locust, elm, and ironwood) would be removed from 200 acres of degraded savanna through a contract or with a four-person six-month crew. Trees would be hand-cut, piled and burned. Herbicide would be applied where necessary to cut stumps.

Summary:

Overall, 90 acres of savanna were restored (20 acres at Observatory Hill and 70 acres at Muir Park). Contractors, DNR staff including interns, Sierra Club volunteers, County Highway staff, Charter School students, and Fish and Wildlife Service staff, completed the restoration work.

The savanna restoration benefited the state-threatened slender bush clover, and the state-endangered slender glass lizard. The restoration also benefited many savanna species such as the red-headed woodpecker, yellow billed cuckoo, eastern kingbird, and eastern bluebird.

If enough savanna can be restored in Wisconsin, it will help keep species of the federal and state endangered and threaten list and help meet recovery goals for listed species.

The original budget request was for \$60,000 to restore 200 acres. The final acreage restored was less than projected since the grant only provided \$40,000 and savanna work was done in some of the most time consuming areas.

Observatory Hill

- Garlic mustard was controlled by herbicide and pulling on 15 acres.
- Black locust was herbicided on 1 acre.
- 20-acres of savanna were restored by removing woody species.

Muir Park

- Garlic mustard was controlled on one acre.
- Black locust was herbicided on 15 acres.
- 60-acres of savanna were restored by removing woody species.
- Three aspen clones at girdled on two acres.
- Dense brush (gray dogwood) was cut and treated on 8 acres.
- Prescribed burning was conducted on 40 acres.

